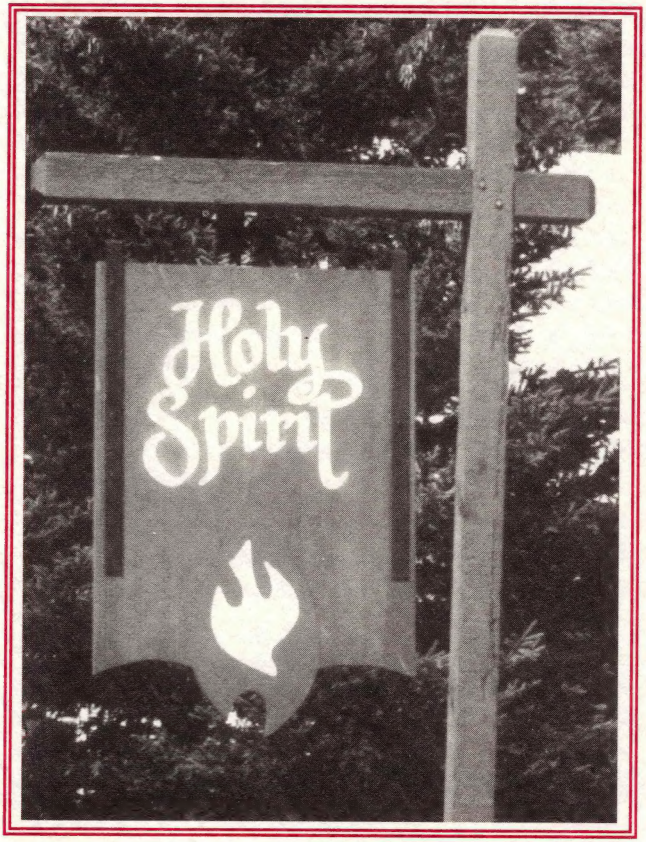
Dedication



To the Holy Spirit
whose work,
through those listed,
gave birth to this parish.

The Flame lives on
in the heart
of this parish
...its people.

The history of Holy Spirit Parish must begin with its roots at Sacred Heart Parish, Gardner, Massachusetts. In the early 1950's, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Martin J. Tracy, pastor of Sacred Heart at the time, announced that a mission church was to be constructed for the main purpose of "relieving the congestion at the Masses at Sacred Heart Church."

This mission would eventually be erected on land (near the corner of Lovewell and Metcalf Streets) donated by Mrs. Veronica Grigalauskas in memory of her late husband, Anthony.

A number of events were planned for the purpose of raising funds for the new mission. Among those who served faithfully on those first committee were: *John Akens, Francis Audette, Mr & Mrs. Malcolm G. Austin, Richard Ballam, Rep. Fred A. Blake, Mrs. Robert L. Bolster, Roland Bourgeois, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond B. Carey, W. Joseph Carr, Dr. Edward Carroll, Dr. W. Edward Carroll, Jr., Mrs. Earle Conners, Donald Cormier, F. J. Cosentino, Mrs. Florence J. Crowley, Stanley Cwartkowski, Edward Demers, Paul Driscoll, Walter Dubzinski, William Eacman, Jeremiah Finnegan, Raymond Flanagan, Miss Cecelia Gearan, Leonard Gearan, Miss Marie M. Gearan, Stanley Gonyeo, Albert Griffin, Hugh Henchey, Mrs. James Henricks, Mrs. J. Cornwell Holt, Joseph Homans, Albert Hopkins, William Horrigan, Burr Jacobsen, Forrest Knight, Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Kraskouskas, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kraskouskas, Henry LaRoche, Chester Lesneski, the former city councilor and Mrs. James Q. Lupien, M.J. Marane, Michael Marnane, Charles Maynard, Robert Morgan, Kenneth Morris, John Neville, Alfred Nobrega, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Osterberg, Chester Pacocha, Angus J. Poules, Miss Blanche Remidis, Lawrence Robinson, William Shea, Dennis Toomey, Paul Twine, Mrs. David Vincent, William Wisniauskas, Paul Woodcome.*

In the Autumn of 1953, construction began on what was being referred to as 'the new mission chapel.' On December 19, 1954, the chapel was opened on Sunday afternoon, from 2-4 for public inspection.

The Gardner News described the chapel as costing "$150,000 to build, and construction of yellow brick containing a bell tower and bell which will ring for each service. The interior woodwork is of red oak as is the altar, which contains emblems of the Holy Ghost.

A mother's room, will accommodate a dozen mothers and their children. A parking area will take care of 90 cars. The church proper seats 400 and contains a basement hall with a seating capacity of 350. A kitchen, stage, storage, and checking room have also been added to the basement areas."

Dirsa & Lampson of Manchester, NH were the architects. Construction was carried out by W.W. Granger Co., Framingham.

Midnight Mass was celebrated before an 'overflow congregation' on December 24, 1954. Rev. Arthur J. Heamer (curate at Sacred Heart) celebrated Mass and delivered the sermon.

Even after the mission church was opened, military whist parties continued.

A $124 wrist watch was awarded to Mrs. Dora Cunningham of 190 High Street, who guessed when the chapel clock stopped.

Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

MRS. MATTHEW NOLAN — MRS. PAUL TWINE
MRS. ROBERT BOLSTER — MRS. RICHARD WHITE
MISS BLANCHE REMIDIS — MRS. MAURICE FAVREAU

Parish Youth Council

1955:

President ..... JOHN LUPIEN
Vice-President ..... ELEANOR LAJOIE
Secretary ..... JACQUELINE PACIOREK
Treasurer ..... ELEANOR CUNNINGHAM
Chairmen of Committees ..... MICHAEL REILLY,
THOMAS CROWLEY, MARY KANGAS, EDWARD LAFORTUNE
Delegates ..... JUDITH CALLAHAN, JAMES REILLY

1955-1956:

President ..... EDWARD LAFORTUNE
Vice-President ..... DONNA GLINSKI
Secretary ..... MARY KANGAS
Treasurer ..... DOROTHY CUNNINGHAM
Chairmen of Committees ..... ALDA MOSCHEN,
THOMAS CROWLEY, JAMES REILLY, PAUL MORRIS
Delegates ..... MICHAEL REILLY, PATRICIA NOLAN

Altar Boy Society

Master of Ceremonies: David Pacocha
James Callahan William Pacocha Michael Maynard
Ernest King Francis Lupien John Reilly Harold Streeter

Senior Choir

Mrs. Raymond Carey, *Organist.* Mrs. Fred Sharron, Mrs. Herbert Wickberg, Mrs. Richard White, Mrs. Albert Adams, Mrs. Anna Leger, Mrs. Neil Heino, Mrs. Edmond Favreau, Mrs. Joseph Homans, Mrs. Joseph Baltakis, Miss Blanche Remidis, Miss Blanche McCormick, Miss Louise Kraskouskas, Mr. Malcolm Austin, Mr. Neil Heino, Mr. Henry Perry, Mr. James Henricks.

Junior Choir

Sheila Leger, *Organist*
Jacqueline Rogers
Dorothy Cunningham
Donna Glinski
Patricia Novak
Sheila Poules
Elizabeth Adams
Mary Kangas
Dorothy Brewer
Alda Moschan
Eleanor Cunningham
Patricia Nolan
Judith Callahan
Elizabeth Delmazzo
Eleanor Lajoie

Holy Spirit Mission became the 24th parish founded by Bishop John J. Wright in the Diocese of Worcester on February 11, 1955. Rev. John B. O'Connell was appointed as its first pastor. Masses continued to be celebrated in the basement of the church until it was ready for occupancy on June 26, 1955.

The construction of the rectory was completed in the Summer of 1956.

Parish Organizations

Men's Club

President .....ANTHONY KRASKOUSKAS
Vice-President .....FURIVANTE COSENTINO
Secretary .....MATTHEW NOLAN
Treasurer .....JOSEPH GLINSKI
Executive Committee—LOUIS RICHARD, JERRY POOLE, WALTER DUBZINSKI, KENNETH MORRIS, FRANK LUCKINGHAM, CHARLES MAYNARD, GUY SPOFFORD, PHILIP MARA, FRANK FISHER, WALTER WALET, JAMES LUPIEN, RAYMOND CAREY, HENRY LAROCHE

Holy Spirit Women's Guild

President .....MRS. EARLE CONNERS
Vice-President .....MRS. T. RAYMOND FLANAGAN
Treasurer .....MRS. CHARLES MAYNARD
Secretary .....MRS. WALTER WALET
Advisor .....Director MISS MARIE GEARAN

Standing Committees

Altar: .....MISS BLANCHE REMIDIS
Chairman ..... MRS. FRANCIS GOSELIN
.....MRS. THOMAS FLYNN, MRS. RAYMOND CAREY,
.....MRS. WALTER DUBZINSKI, MRS. GUY SPOFFORD

Ways and Means .....MRS. ANTHONY KRASKOUSKAS
.....MRS. PETER KRASKOUSKAS
Publicity .....MRS. THOMAS FLYNN
Nominating .....MRS. WALTER WALET, Chairman
MRS. NEIL HEINO, MRS. LOUIS RICHARD
House .....MISS CECILIA GEARAN, Chairman
Dedication .....MRS. ROBERT BOLSTER, Chairman
Program .....MRS. FRED SHARRON

Pastors

Rev. John B. O'Connell

(February 11, 1955)

Noted for his musical ability.

In March of 1955, there was a reception for Fr. O'Connell. Carl Lugbauer was chairman of the event that included entertainment provided by Miss Sheila Leger and Miss Patricia Scerra, Vocalists. Mrs. Raymond B. Carey accompanied Miss Scerra. Monsignor Tracy (Sacred Heart) who was dean of the Gardner deanery, spoke.

The Dedication of the Church of the Holy Spirit took place on June 26, 1955. Bishop John J. Wright, First bishop of the diocese of Worcester, celebrated Pontifical Mass of Dedication. At the time of the dedication there were 400 adult parishioners and 200 children. Parish members took part in several organizations including: men's club, women's club, Catholic Youth Council unit, the Treble choir (made up of high school girls), and a senior mixed choir (made up of adults).

Rev. John B. O'Connell

The annual barbecue was a major fundraiser. Beyond all the work, it was a time of bringing the Holy Spirit parish family together in community and celebration.

During Fr. O'Connell's pastorate at Holy Spirit, he directed musicals involving people of all ages. Among those offered were "Johnny Appleseed" and "Hansel and Gretel". Fr. O'Connell also provided the accompaniment.

From 1963 until February 14, 1976, Fr. Dosithee Berard, S.S.S., although not in residence here, assisted in parish activities.

After Vatican II (1964), when Liturgy was put into English and Mass began to be celebrated facing the people, the altar was taken away from the back wall and the entire sanctuary was renovated by Dick Brothers of Worcester. The organ was relocated from the choir loft to the front of the church shortly after.

In 1966, the Holy Spirit Parish Catholic Youth Council basketball team won the championship under their coach, Paul Girouard. The games were played in Sacred Heart gym.
There were annual Thanksgiving clothing collections and in March of 1968 a parish council was formed.

Rev. Edward F. Gully

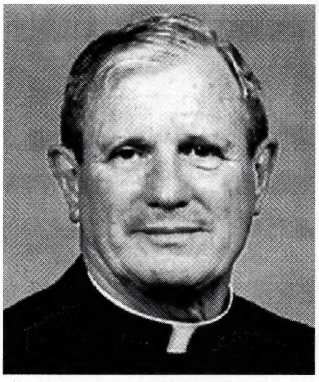
(September 4, 1968)

Rev. Edward F. Gully

Fr. Gully has the distinction of being the first priest ordained specifically for the Worcester Diocese (May 18, 1950).

On September 29, 1968, Fr. Gully was installed as Holy Spirit's second pastor.

Although Fr. Gully's term as pastor of Holy Spirit was brief, he is remembered for his compassion, generosity, and understanding nature.



Rev. John F. Gee

Rev. John F. Gee

(February 12, 1971)

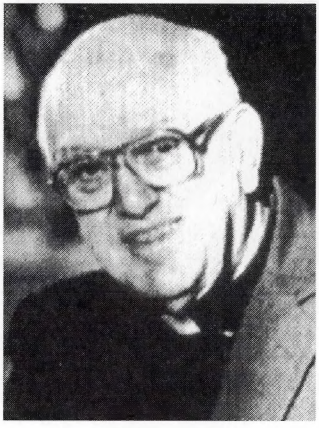
Our third pastor was a former President of the diocesan Senate of Priests and was very active with the Catholic Youth Council.

A number of Social events were held in the early 1970's. Among them were: turkey socials, ham socials, ten pin summer bowling league, a Hawaiian Luau, a 120 Club, a wine tasting party and Dora Roy's well attended Travel Club.

During the early 1970's, Fr. Gee renovated the interior of the church in red flocked wallpaper, pink painted sanctuary and red tweed carpeting.

Rev. Gilbert Chabot

(February, 1976)



Rev. Gilbert Chabot

In February of 1976, Fr. Gilbert Chabot, A.A. was welcomed in residence.

How Great Thou Art! You sent Father Gilbert Chabot to our parish to nourish all parishioners with his "food for thought" sermons sprinkled with clever memorable idioms as well as his "food for the tummy" French cooking complete with recipes.

To each of us, Father Chabot gave something different and unique. To one, the depth of his compassion, to another, a needed new pair of shoes, to someone else lying sick and despondent, a rollicking story complete with hearty laughter, yet another would receive complete acceptance regardless of disturbing personal issues. All of us at Holy Spirit family received whatever it was that we needed at that precise time in our lives.

"Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me." That was Father's creed. That was what he lived for - as well as for good music (especially for his so called "wife" - the organ), for good food and especially for fine restaurants.

Father Gilbert often said his years at Holy Spirit were his best years ever. In fact, he thought he had achieved heaven on earth here on Lovewell Street with his extended Holy Spirit family.

Although he possessed impeccable academic and musical credentials and enjoyed wide scholarly recognition, he is known best to us as our dear friend, our jovial Father Gilbert who touched our lives in very personal lasting ways. We all walk taller, prouder, and richer in spirit as well as wisdom because of him.

So we all join to "sing a new song to the Lord" - How Great Thou Art!

During the country's Bicentennial, Holy Spirit rejoiced with gala celebrations. In June of 1976, Bishop Bernard Flanagan came to Holy Spirit Parish to bless the shrine dedicated to the Blessed Mother. The shrine was built with donations from parishioners, with some of the stones coming from Hubbardston.

Capt. James A. Lovell, commander of the 1970 Apollo 13 space mission, took part in the celebration.

Those present were treated to a bean and frankfurter dinner after which the children enjoyed competitive games. Cookbooks were sold along with arts and crafts, baking goods, homemade candies, a Chinese auction, a white elephant sale and a rummage sale.

Entertainment came in the form of Charlie Bradshaw (singing pianist), the "Northeast Express" (a barbershop quartet), and a 60-man barbershop chorus called "Sounds of Concord" that performed in Gardner High School's Pearson Auditorium.

Andre W. Croteau

On January 14, 1979, Holy Spirit Parish welcomed Andre W. Croteau as a new permanent deacon.

With Holy Spirit's 25th Anniversary as a parish approaching, a series of special Liturgies and services were held from September, 1979 to May 1980, concluding with a special anniversary Mass celebrated by Most Reverend Bernard J. Flanagan on May 25, 1980.

On February 15, 1981, Holy Spirit Parishioners honored Fr. Gee with a farewell reception.

Rev. Peter H. White

(February 20, 1981)

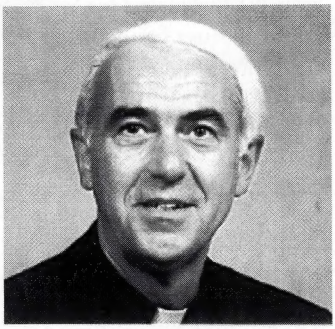
Self-described in a parish as "involved in everything but the Woman's Guild".

On March 1, 1981, Fr. Peter White was welcomed into the parish.

Roses and butterflies had new meaning for us due to his appreciation of them.

Our fourth pastor opened the door for many new experiences and opportunities for his flock. He introduced "The Spirit Fair" in 1981 which has continued to provide an opportunity for our parish family to join together for an annual fundraising event.

Beginning in 1983, a tunnel from the rectory basement to the church hall was constructed and eventually the new area became our much needed CCD Center. One section was used as a small chapel for morning Mass during the colder months to accommodate the worshippers in an intimate setting without heating the entire church building.



Rev. Peter H. White

The last Bingo was held on May 27, 1984 and shortly thereafter the parish mortgage was burned on June 1, 1984.

In October, 1984 the house and land on the corner of Metcalf and Lovewell Streets was purchased for $40,000.00. The "house on the corner" was sold to Bill & Mary Hulette and moved to its present High Street location (in June of 1985), to enlarge the parish grounds.

After the house was transferred to its new location, a stone wall was built around the church property by Earl "Skip" Meagher and his son Kevin.

In the Spring of 1985, the church hall underwent a much needed renovation.

A major landscaping project was taken on in 1986.

New exterior doors were installed on the front of the church building by May 14, 1985 for Holy Spirit's 30th Anniversary. Side exterior doors were replaced in June 1987.

After many training sessions, the people of Holy Spirit Parish were invited to share in the Process of Renew. For many, "Small Faith-Sharing Groups" was new and a little intimidating, but ninety-three braved the new experience that first season in October of 1987. One teen and twelve adult faith-sharing groups met weekly for a five week period per season.

Each term more new faces were welcomed into the process and before long a children's group took root. Through five seasons ending in October, 1989, numbers varied from as few as ninety-three to as many as 113 participants.

As a result of Renew, many ministries took shape and continue to serve our parish family. Some of these ministries include: Hospitality, Greeters at Mass, mailing ministry, prayer groups, prayer network. A parish Youth Group was revived through Mark Rivard's diligent effort.

The Renew Chairpersons were: Donald & Aline Cosentino (coordinators), Patricia Charland (staff), Gerry Vincent (publicity), Louis Morgenstern (home visits), Donna St.Clair (sign-up Sunday), Barry Brown (small group coordinator), Irene Bowse (take home materials), Dianne Scott (Sunday Liturgy), Joanne Brown (telephone committee), Kathy Vincent & Skip Scott (evaluation), Rosella Ouellet & Rita Daigle (prayer network).

In the Spring of 1987, Sr. Nancy Welsh, S.S.J., became Minister of Spirituality for both Holy Spirit and Sacred Heart Parishes.

Fr. Peter provided the opportunity for young girls to serve at Mass.

On Pentecost in 1988, a shrine was dedicated to "The Risen Christ". It was constructed on the reverse side of Our Lady's Shrine. The statue is poised on a pedestal constructed by Francis Ouellet and his son Robert. The figure was purchased with contributions made by the David Jacques family in memory of their son, Daniel. At the conclusion of the blessing, red and white balloons carrying scriptural messages were released in observance of the occasion.

Between Autumn of 1988 and Spring of 1989, the front exterior of the church building was remodeled to provide for wheelchair access.

In June of 1990, Fr. Peter was bid a fond farewell with a garden party in the church hall.

Rev. Andre M. Gariepy

(June 29, 1990)

All inquiries as to what our new pastor was like were answered with the phrase: "He's a real people person".

Rev. Andre M. Gariepy

Our fifth and present pastor has given his flock countless opportunities to serve the parish community and develop our spirituality.

Major changes to the CCD program were instituted along with an intense course of study for Confirmation candidates and their sponsors.

R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) became an active part of our spiritual community. At each Easter Vigil, we look forward to receiving new members into our "parish family".

Each year Fr. Andy inquires as to the possibility of infants being born by year's end so that a "real baby" would be present at the Children's Christmas Eve Liturgy.

On Sunday morning, May 31, 1992, many of us awoke to the sad reality that the Catholic Charities truck, that was used for food distribution among other acts of benevolence, was torched in Holy Spirit's parking lot the night before. By Father's Day plans for a spaghetti supper and Chinese Auction were already under way. Soon a committee of sorts took shape:

Aline Cosentino (Chinese Auction), Don Cosentino (50/50 Raffle), Patrick "Butch" St.Clair (food preparation), Donna St.Clair (poster making and distribution), Debbie Johnson (set-up & clean-up), Barry & Joanne Brown (T-shirt sale), Bob Morgenstern (sale of supper tickets). Nathan Brown (member of our Youth Group) came up with the slogan "I gave bucks for the truck" that was printed on shirts and posters. Debbie Hanks, a talented artist from Holy Rosary Parish designed the logo.

Butch St. Clair & Bob Morgenstern headed the "Kitchen Ministry" to produce Holy Spirit's now famous Spaghetti Supper. Their ministry continues, as occasions warrant, with an array of feasts from roast beef dinners to pancake breakfasts. Set-up, serving, and clean-up is usually accomplished by the Youth Group under the direction of Debbie Johnson, the current youth minister.

By August 1, 1992, the North Worcester County came together for a fund-raiser to end all fund-raisers. Events took place at Holy Spirit, but donations came in from all over the Worcester Diocese. In the end, the Catholic Charities truck was replaced and the good works continued.

The interior of the church building experienced a major facelift when the red and pink flocked paper was removed to make way for earth tones of beige and cream paint. One section of a pew, in front of the Tabernacle, was removed to provide space for wheelchairs.
A successful "Mission Support Supper" was held in the parish hall on October 16, 1993, for the purpose of raising funds to start a "Health Fund" for the people of the Xaverian Mission in Masiaka, Sierra Leone.

Due to the growing numbers in Holy Spirit's CCD program, Donna St.Clair was appointed CCD Administrator.

On April 23, 1995, Holy Spirit Parish received its second deacon after an extended absence. The newly ordained permanent Deacon David Isabelle started his ministry and we look forward to working with David and his wife Gale in the years to come. Baptismal and marriage preparation (Couple to Couple) are two ways in which David & Gale will minister to our parish. Others involved in Baptismal preparation are: Sr. Nancy Welch, Mark & Sandy Fredette, Ed & Sharon Begley-Ternosky. Those who assist in Couple to Couple ministry are: Mark & Sue Rivard, Gladys & Charlie Richardson.

Deacon David Isabelle

During the summer of 1995, Holy Spirit was blessed with a newly ordained transitional Deacon Emerito Ortiz. His presence here provided a special opportunity for our Spanish speaking brothers and sisters.

Sunday April 30 was an exciting day for the Catholic Hispanic Community of Gardner and the surrounding towns. At 3PM we met at the Church Hall about 80 Hispanics gathered together and shared a meal with Father Gariepy, who made it possible for this community to have the Holy Mass said in Spanish. Since then, every weekend there is a

Mass for this small community. Father Gariepy has identified with this community so well that he has no problems saying the whole Mass in Spanish, as well as honor some of their traditions which are celebrated with the latin beat.

It's not uncommon to see a few non-hispanics church members attending these masses.

During the summer Father Gariepy made it possible for us to have a Hispanic deacon: Emerito Ortiz and we did enjoy him so much.

This wonderful event has changed the life of so many people because the parishioners of the church were so understanding and welcomed their Hispanics brothers in Christ with open arms.

Every Wednesday night at the church hall there are meetings to see how we can help the Hispanics Catholics in the area. Also on Friday nights at 7pm there is a group that gathers together to pray to the Holy Sacrament.

Also, we are saying Rosaries in the home of parishioners, trying to evangelize and bring togetherness. We are proud to say that Holy Spirit is the first parish in the area to welcome the Hispanics as their brothers and sisters in Christ, and Father Andre Gariepy is the responsible person for this wonderful success. GRACIAS PADRE ANDRES!

Most Reverend George E. Rueger, DD, Auxiliary Bishop, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving on October 1, 1995, to commemorate our 40th Anniversary. A brunch, followed in the church hall. Memorabilia was on display.

Special People/ Holy Spirit Firsts

Helen Carroll (retired school teacher who lived at the rectory as cook & housekeeper). Helen loved her work at the rectory. Those who remember her commented that being housekeeper was, 'the best thing that ever happened to her'.

Sophie Belliveau (part time housekeeper with Helen Carroll).

Germaine Savoie (housekeeper from September 1963 - June 1990). Germaine worked for four pastors. From the beginning, she was housekeeper, cook, grocery shopper, sacristan, secretary, etc. When Fr. Chabot arrived, he took over the shopping duties due to his love of shopping. Germaine saw to it that fresh fruit, in season, was always available even if it meant picking it herself. Germaine fondly remembers all the priests that came to live in the rectory as being gentlemen and being very nice to her.

Guy Spofford (custodian) A trusty and faithful caretaker of the House of God. Guy was the caretaker for Holy Spirit Parish under the first four pastors, Frs. O'Connell, Gully, Gee and White. His meticulous work kept the church and property in excellent condition. He was also known to have everything in its place and a place for everything. If you needed something, you just had to ask and he would have it right there.

Dan O'Dea (custodian beginning October 1989). Dan has been witness to an abundance of improvements made which helped to preserve the integrity of the parish property.

First Baptism

February 20, 1955
Daniel John Beers
30 W. Broadway, Gardner
(parents: Richard Tracy Beers and Mary Nolan)

First Marriage:

June 4, 1955
Ronald Francis LaBatt
Jacqualyn Mae Olechnicki

First parish member to enter priesthood:

Walter Conlan, Jr. - Jesuit Priest - ordained - May 30, 1976 at Holy Cross College (where he went to school). First Mass-May 31, 1976 at Holy Spirit Church.

Fr. Conlan has spent the last 14 years working in Brazil. Recently, he was named one of the Vice Presidents of Universidade Catolica De Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil.